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To: District and County Superintendents
Attention: Directors of Testing
Directors of Curriculum
Directors of Special Education

From: K. Gwen Stephens, Director
Standards and Assessment Division

Subject: **Update on Standards and Assessment**

A variety of events and decisions related to Standards and Assessment has occurred since the last update. The California Department of Education (CDE) held its North/South Standards and Assessment information meetings on December 14 and 15. Districts can find a complete set of the overheads used in the meetings, in color or black and white, at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/sca/northsouth.html>.

Decisions have been made recently that will affect the STAR program and the High School Exit Examination. From January through June 2000, the following state-sponsored or approved testing will occur in some or all schools in California: Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program: Stanford 9 and STAR Augmentation, SABE/2; Golden State Examinations; Assessments in Career Education (ACE); National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); STAR field testing in reading, mathematics, science, history-social science, and direct writing; field testing of the High School Exit Exam (HSEE); physical fitness testing.

Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

All districts were to have returned Data Verification Forms and signed security agreements to the Harcourt STAR Service Center by December 15. If any district has not returned its DVF and thus has not received information from Harcourt Educational Measurement about pre-identification or about pre-test workshops, the district should contact the STAR Service Center immediately. Districts that did not return the DVF by January 4 may be assigned the testing dates used last year, may receive materials based on last year's enrollments, and may be charged for shipping for any additional materials that may be needed. Districts are strongly urged to attend the HEM pre-test workshop at a location most convenient for the district. Districts must pre-register for the workshops using materials provided by HEM. District coordinators will receive the district coordinator "kit"/pre-test training materials beginning the week of January 24th and should bring the materials to the pre-test workshops.

CORRECTION: Page 3, Standards and Assessment Division telephone number listed has been corrected to (916) 657-3011

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Order information for the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE/2) was due to CTB/McGraw Hill by December 20. CTB is conducting the majority of its pre-test workshops during the last week of January and the first week of February.

Districts that have been contacted to participate in the field testing of STAR items/tests in science, history/social science, reading, mathematics, and/or direct writing are strongly encouraged to serve as a sample site. Relatively few students will be sampled for each test at a given school, and every student tested contributes to improving the test and making the test results as valid and accurate as possible.

The State Board of Education (SBE) at its meeting January 12-14, 2000 decided upon the content to be tested in the STAR augmentation tests for history/social science and science. After field-testing in spring 2000, testing in these areas will commence in spring 2001. Further information about the exact content of the tests and the students for whom each test is intended will be provided under separate cover.

Regulations for the STAR program were distributed to school districts for comment in December 1999. A public hearing on the regulations will be held at the next regular meeting of the State Board of Education, on February 10, 2000 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 166A, California Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento 95814. Written comments on the regulations may be addressed to Peggy Peters at the address above. Persons wishing to testify on the regulations should contact the State Board of Education at (916) 657-5478.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Districts asked to participate in the NAEP 2000 assessments are strongly encouraged to do so. Full participation by districts chosen for NAEP will allow California's results to be representative of the state. NAEP is the only means of obtaining an accurate assessment of California's performance relative to the rest of the states. NAEP testing will occur in February, before STAR or other state testing programs begin. California has participated in NAEP during every testing cycle that has occurred since its inception. Districts that have concerns or reservations about participating are invited to contact the Department for information to address those concerns.

High School Exit Examination

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) will develop the High School Exit Examination under contract to the California Department of Education. AIR will contact schools about participating in the first HSEE field test. The field test will take place from May 15 through May 31 at selected schools with a sample of students from each school selected. The High School Exit Exam will address the SBE-adopted language arts content standards through grades nine and ten, and the mathematics standards through grade seven and algebra 1.

The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) will conduct the independent evaluation of the High School Exit Examination as required by Education Code section 60855. Schools and districts that receive requests for information, documents, data, etc. from HumRRO should make every effort to provide the information requested and to cooperate fully with HumRRO.

Districts will receive additional information about the High School Exit Examination (HSEE) as it becomes available. A packet that includes a sample notification to parents and students as required in Education Code section 48980(e) will be provided in spring 2000. Districts are reminded that in order to prepare students to pass the exit examination, districts must provide courses, curriculum, and instruction that are aligned to SBE-adopted content standards, must ensure that all students are enrolled in those courses, and that students who fail to make sufficient progress toward passing the exit examination as defined in Education Code section 37252 are provided summer school opportunities to remedy their lack of progress.

Physical Fitness Testing - 1999-2000

As specified in Education Code Section 60800 districts with grades five, seven, or nine are required annually to assess all students for physical fitness during the months of March, April, or May. The *Fitnessgram* will continue as the required fitness test designated by the State Board of Education. Districts may order test materials for *Fitnessgram* from Human Kinetics. Their toll-free number is (800) 747-4457. Materials are not available from the California Department of Education (CDE).

CDE is required by statute to collect data on physical fitness once every two years. Since results were collected in 1998-99, CDE **will not** be collecting data on 1999-2000 assessment results. Statewide results will again be collected in 2000-01.

Physical Fitness Testing 1998-99

Results for the state, counties, districts and schools will be available to the public via Internet by February 2000. These results will be available on the CDE web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/sca>. As required by law, a report of the results was sent to the Governor and Legislature in January.

Data were collected from approximately 70% of the school districts in California. Over one million students were tested in grades 5, 7, and 9. The results indicate that most students at all three grade levels are not fit. Students must meet the minimum fitness standards for all six areas of the fitness test to be considered fit and about 80 percent of students tested did not achieve that goal.

For questions or further information about standards and assessment, contact the Standards and Assessment Division at (916) 657-3011 (phone); (916) 657-4964 (fax); or star@cde.ca.gov (email); or visit our web site: www.cde.ca.gov/sca.